

THE
P O O R E
Doubting
CHRISTIAN
Drawne to
CHRIST.

Wherein the maine lets and
hindrances which keepe men
from comming to CHRIST
are discovered.

With speciall helpes to recover
G O D S favour.

*Ho, every one that thirsteth, drinke of the
waters of life, and hee that hath no
money. come buy and eate freely.*

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BOOK

CHRISTIAN

CHRIST

CHRIST

CHRIST

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CHRIST

CHRIST



THE
P O O R E
D O V B T I N G
C H R I S T I A N
drawne unto
Christ.

IOHN 6. 45.

*Every man therefore that
hath heard and hath lear-
ned of the Father, cometh
unto me.*

THere are divers
lets and impedi-
ments which hin-
der poore Christians from
A 2 com-

The poore doubting Christian

comming unto CHRIST,
all which I desire to
reduce to these following
heads.

First, such hinderances
as really keepe men from
comming to take hold of
Christ at all, which are
briefly these.

Letts which
hinder me
from com-
ming to
Christ.

1. Blind carelesnesse,
or presumptuous securi-
ty, whereby men content
themselves in their pre-
sent condition, presuming
all is well with them, when
there is no such matter.

2. Being convinced of
this, they bethinke how to
save themselves by their
own strength, & thereupon
set upon a reformation of
life, thinking to make God
amends by reforming
some

some sins which they heare themselves reprov'd of by the Ministers.

3. The sinner being convinced of his utter inability to please God in himselfe, at length gets up a stayre higher, and sees all his performances, & prayers, and duties to bee of no power in themselves, but that he must leave all, and cleave onely unto *Christ* by faith; and this he thinks hee can doe well enough, and so thrusts himselfe upon *Christ*, thinking all the worke is then done, and no more to bee looked after.

4. If hee sees this failes him too, then he goes yet further, and confesseth he

cannot come to *Christ* except *Christ* give him his hand, and helpe him up: therefore now hee will attend upon the ordinances, and labour and bestirre himselfe hard in the use of all good meanes, conceiving thereby to hammer out at last, a *faith* of his own to make him happy. And here hee rests, hanging as it were upon the outside of the Arke, so long till at last the waves and winds growing fierce and violent; hee is beaten off from his hold, and so sinkes for ever.

Besides these, there are other kinds of hinderances which doe not indeed deprive a man of life and interest

terrest to eternall happi-
nesse, but make the way
tedious & uncomfortable,
so that he cannot come to
Christ so readily as he de-
sires and longs to doe; the
ground whereof is this,
when men out of carnall
reason contrive another
way to come unto Christ,
then ever hee ordained or
revealed, when wee set up
a standard by Gods Stan-
dard, and out of our owne
imagination make another
condition of beleeving
than ever *Christ* required
or ordained. Thus wee
make barres in the way,
and manacle our hands, &
fetter our feete, and then
wee complaine we cannot
goe : thus it is with you

A 4 poore

Three
main hin-
derances
which
keepe men
from *Christ*

poore Christians, and the fault is your owne. Now amongst many there bee three hindrances which are chiefly to bee observed, by which many gracious hearts are marvelously hindred from coming to, and from receiving that comfort from *Christ*, which they might, and hee is willing to bestow.

I.

First, the distressed soule being happily truly humbled, takes notice of the beauty of holinesse, and the Image of God stampt upon the hearts of his children, and of all those precious promises which *God* hath made to all that are his ; now the soule seeing these,

these, begins thus to reason with himselfe, and saith, Surely if I were so holy and so gracious, then I might have hope to receive the pardon of my sinnes; for were my heart so enlarged to duties, and could my heart be so carryed with power against my corruptions to master them; then there were some hope; but when I have no power against sin, nor any heart to seeke so importunately for a *Christ*, how dare I thinke that any mercy belongs to me, having so many wants? thus they dare not come to the promise, and they will not venture upon it, because they have not that enlarge-

As; ment

ment to duties, and that power against corruption which sometimes the Saints of God have.

But wee must know this doth not hinder, wee make it a hinderance, when in truth it is none ; for observe it, we must not think to bring enlargement and hope to the promise, but wee must goe to the promise for them ; hope must be stirred, and desire quickened, and love and joy kindled by the promise ; who made this a condition of the Covenant that a man must have so much enlargement before he come to the promise : our Saviour requires no portion, but meere poverty and
empri-

emptinesse : if thou hast nothing he will have thee, provided that thou wilt have him; *The rich bee sends empty way,* but the poore is satisfied, and the thirsty refreshed, there is nothing required on our side, but onely to receive him as a husband : *Buy without money,* saith the Text ; you must not thinke to come and buy a husband ; the Lord lookes for no power or sufficiency of our selves, no power against corruption, nor enlargement to duties ; if you will bee content that *Christ* shall take all from you, and dispose of you, then, take a *Saviour*, and have him.

Luke 1. 53.

Esa. 55. 1.

But the poore soule
saith,

Quest.

saith, if I goe thus hūd-winked, how shall I know that I doe not presume, and how shall I know that I have a true title to the promise.

Ans.

I answer, there is no better argument in the world that thou hast an interest in *Christ*, than this, thy taking of the Lord *Christ* as a *Saviour* wholly, and as a husband. *Iohn* 1. 12, *As many as received him, to him hee gave power to be the sonnes of God, even to them that beleeve on his name.* He doth not say, to as many as had such enlargement in duties, and such power against corruptions; but if thou wilt take *Christ* upon those termes

termes which hee offers himselfe, there is no better argument under heaven, that thou hast a title to the promise. There is a desperate despaire that often seazeth upon the hearts of distressed sinners.

2.
Therefore in the second place, as the sinner looks upon the excellency of *Christ*, and grace, and his owne insufficiency, and so will not venture upon the promise, so he looks upon his own sinfulness and *unworthiness*, and therefore dares not venture upon mercy; hee viewes the number of his sinnes so many & vile, and the continuance of them so long, and he seeth the floods of abomi-

abominations coming in
 amaine upon his soule, and
 Satan helps him forwards
 hereto; for this is the po-
 licy of the Devil, that, if
 he can, he will make a man
 that hee shall never see his
 sinne, but say, there is mer-
 cy enough in a *SAVIOUR*,
 and therefore I may live
 as I list; but when the sin-
 ner will needs see his sinne,
 then hee will let him see
 nothing but sinne; the one
 that hee may presume, and
 the other that hee may de-
 spaire.

Now the poore sinner
 stayes here; tell him of the
 mercy of God, and of the
 plenteous redemption in
Christ, and of the riches
 of the freeness of Gods
 grace,

grace, What, saith hee,
should I thinke that there
is any mercy for me, and
that I have any interest in
Christ? that were strange;
And thus the soule is here
poring, and fastened, and
settled upon his corrupti-
on, and is ever stirring the
wound, and never goes to
the Physician: For a man is
as well kept from loo'ing
to *Christ* by despaire, as by
presumption; before hee
fees his sinne, he thinks his
condition is good, and hee
hath a sufficiency of his
owne, and needs not goe
to *Christ*; and when hee
fees his sinne, then he be-
holds so much vilenesse in
himselke that hee dares not
goe to *Christ*, lest when
he

hee goes before him, hee send him down to the pit. Herein the Devill is very subtil ; but this doth not hinder our title to *Christ*, neither ought it to discourage our hearts from laying hold on salvation.

For first, (observe it) for whom did *Christ* come into the world, & for whom did hee die when hee was come ? it was not for the *righteous*, that needed him not, but for the *poore sinner* that condemnes himselfe, and knowes he cannot save himselfe. *Paul* saith, *Christ Iesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chiefe* : and *Zach. 13. 1. There is a fountaine opened for sinne, and for*

1 Tim. 1. 15.

for uncleannesse, that is, for all sorts of sinnes, and for all kinde of sinners: be their iniquities never so great, and never so vile, there is a fountaine set open, come who will; there was never any saved but a Rebel, and never any man received to mercy, but hee that opposed the mercy of God, and his grace in *Christ*. The fiery Serpents did sting the people in the *Wildernesse*, but there was a brazen Serpent to heale them.

Observe the folly of this plea: what Scripture ever said that the greatnesse of mans sinne could hinder the greatnesse of *G O D S* mercy? no Scripture reveals

Psal 25.11.

veales this, wee see David prayeth the contrary, Have mercy upon mee o LORD, and pardon my sins, for they are great; nay, God himselve doth the quite contrary, Esa. 43. 24, 25. Thou hast made mee serve with thy sins, and wearied mee with thine iniquities, yet I am hee that blotte out thy transgressions, for my Names sake. When the Iewes did tire GOD with their distempers, and burthened him with their sinfull courses, then the Lord for his owne names sake would not so much as remember their iniquities against them.

Againe observe, that sinnes though they bee never so haynous of themselves,

felyes, yet if the soule can see them, and the heart bee burthened wth them, they are so farre from hindering the worke of faith, and frō making thee incapable of mercy, that they fit thee to goe to *Christ* : The truth is, (which I pray you take notice of) it is not properly our unworthinesse, but our pride and haughtinesse that hinders us from cōming to *Christ*; for wee would have something in our selves, and not have all from *Christ*. Take the distressed soule that sees the vilenesse of his sinnes; suppose thy sinnes were fewer, neverthelesse even then thou goest not to *Christ*, because thou art perswa-

perswaded of the freeness of his grace, but because thou hast a worthinesse in thy self, and wouldst bring something to *Christ*, and not receive all from him: Therefore it is thy pride, and thy self-conceitednesse that hinders thee, thou must have thus much grace and holinesse, and *Christ* must not justify the ungodly, but the godly man; I tell thee, then hee will never justify a man while the world stands.

Object.

But the soule replies againe, My finnes are worse, not onely because they are many, but because of the mercy and salvation that I have rejected, which hath
beene

been offered me from day to day.

This hinders not, provided that thou canst see those evils of thine: though thou hast cast away the kindnesse of the Lord, yet the Lord wil not cast away thee, if thou wilt come and seeke him earnestly againe: *For the iniquity of his covetousnesse I was wroth (saith God) & I smote him, I hid my selfe, and hee went on forwardly in the way of his owne heart.* If this could have hindred, *Israhel* shou'd never have received mercy; but the Text saith, I have seene his wayes, and will heale him; *Tbou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet turne againe to me,*

Ans.

Esay 57.
17, 18.

lere. 3. 1.

me, saith the Lord. There is no time past if a man have but a heart to returne; there is no limitation of the riches of Gods free grace, except the sin against the Holy Ghost, *Re. 3. 20. I stand at the door and knocke;* though hee cry till he be hoarse, and stand till he bee weary, yet hee stands still: if any aduke-rous or deceitfull wretch will open, the Lord will come in, and bring comfort, and suppe with him.

Object.

Oh, that is true, saith the poore soule, had I but a heart to mourne for my basenesse; see my sinnes I doe, but this is my misery, I cannot bee burthened with them, I have a heart
that

that cannot breake and
mourne for dishonouring
of God.

This hinders not nei-
ther, provided that thy
heart is weary of it selfe,
that it cannot bee weary of
sinne: *The Lord shewes mer-
cy, because he will shew mer-
cy*; it is not because thou
canst please him, but be-
cause mercy pleaseth him.
When did the Lord shew
mercy to *Paul*, even then
when *Paul* did expresse
most malice against him;
*Saul, Saul, why persecutest
thou me?* Hee persecutes
Christ, and yet *Christ* pi-
ties him, and shewes him
mercy; and so the churlish
laylor, when hee was most
opposite against the means
of

Answ.

Mich. 7. 18.

AAs.

of grace, the Lord shewed then most compassion upon him; he that before resisted the meanes of grace, was now brought home by those meanes.

Object.

But woe, saith the poore soule, you are now come to the quicke; this very word is like a Milstone about my necke, to sink my soule for ever; for this is the depth of that basenesse that lies on me, that all the meanes doe not better me. Why, though *Paul* and the laylor were bad enough, yet they were made better by the meanes; but this is my hopelesse condition, that the meanes of grace prevaile not on mee. Is there such a heart in hell
as

as I; how ill must I needs be, when all the meanes in the world will doe mee no good? but, methinkes, I feele my heart more hard and stubborne under all **G O D s** Ordinances; my condition is certainly hopelesse, when the means that should soften me, doe but harden me, and make me worse.

This is the last plea whereby the devill holds down the heart of a poore sinner; but let me answer thee, this hinders not neither, but that at least thou maist have hope of mercy, therefore observe three passages by way of answer.

First, the Word and
B meanes

Ans.

I

means of grace doe worke good, if it make thee more sensible of thy hardnesse and deadnesse, though happily it worke not that good, and after the same manner that thou desirest, yet if it make thee see thy basenesse, and hardnesse of heart, and dulnesse, in regard of that body of death which hangs upon thee; then the Word workes in the best manner, because it is after Gods manner, howsoever not after thine: That Physicke works most kindly, - that makes the party sick before it works; so it is with the Word: thou hast a proud heart, and liftest up thy selfe in thine owne abilities, and trustest

trustest in thine owne strength, and thinkest that thy care and improvement of the means, would work wonders; but now the word works sweetly, when it makes thee apprehensive, that a wounded soule is the gift of God, not of man, nor of the meanes; and therefore the Word makes thee looke to God for it, and to prize it when thou hast it; and the Word makes thee looke to God to continue it; to feele deadnesse is life, and to feele hardnesse is softnesse; onely remember this one Caution, except there bee some lust or distemper that thy heart hankers after, for then the

Caution.

Word will harden thee, becaufethou hardenest thy felfe.

2

Secondly, (marke this I befeech you) thou art the cause why thy heart is not softned, & why the Word works not upon thy foule; the diftemper of thy owne heart hinders the working of the word, and difpenfation of Gods providence, and the tenour of the Covenant of Grace; thou must not thinke to limit the Holy One of Israel, for it is a Covenant of Grace; the Lord will not stand bent to thy bow, and give thee grace when thou wilt; it is not for us to know the times & seasons. What if the Lord will not
give

Wait for
mercy.

give thee grace this yeare,
nor the next, nor all thy
life; if at the last gaspe he
will drop in a little favor, it
is more than he owes thee:
therfore heare to day, and
waite to morrow, and con-
tinue so doing, because
thou knowest not when
God may blesse his owne
Ordinances; and complain
not of delayes, but waite,
for God hath waited for
you long: and therefore if
hee make you waite for
peace of conscience, and
assurance of his love, the
Lord deales equally with
you, and as shall bee best
for you; God gives what,
and when, and how he wil,
therefore waite for it.

Thirdly, know and con-

B 3 sider

Rest not
upon du-
ties.

sider, that thou hast rested upon thine owne duties and endeavours, and thou doest not goe to God, that bleffeth both the meanes and endeavours; the fault is thine owne, (I say) because thou retest in thine owne performances, and in the power of the means that thou apprehendest; and doest not goe to God, that would have wrought more than all these for did a man depend upon Gods ~~power~~ and mercy in his Ordinances, hee should alwayes finde some proportionable succour, as well when he finds no successe, as when hee finds any; for God sometimes gives, and sometimes delays, but
Gods

G O D S love is as constant when he gives not, as when he gives. Therefore labour to get out from all carnall confidence in holy duties, and rest not in thy performances, but looke beyond all duties to God, and desire him to give thee successe above them.

Many a man makes his services, his *Saviours*. He makes them the bottome to beare up his conscience, ~~the ground~~ whereof is this: Happily he finds and feels by woful experience, what the fruits of sinne are. He sees the venom of his corruptions, and the lamentable effects of all his sinfull practises. He thought it before a fine thing to

B 4 sweare,

fweare, and lie, and drink,
and follow base company,
but now they are gravell
to his heart, and gall to his
soule. His conscience fly-
eth in his face, and hee is
ready to sink down to hel.
Conscience saith, these bee
thy finnes, and these will
bee thy damnation; they
have been thy delight, but
they will prove thy shame
and confusion in the end,
thou shalt shortly find the
smart of them; [redacted];
[redacted]

Now this man hath no
cure for his conscience but
this, hee entreates *Consci-*
ence to bee quiet; he con-
fesseth hee hath lived in
base courses, and his con-
dition is very miserable,
but

but now hee will reforme all; hee hath neglected *prayer* heretofore, but now he will pray; hee hath hated **G O D**s servants, but now he will love them; his wayes have beene exceeding evill, but now he will reforme them; hee begins to turne a new leafe now, and thinkes that will serve the turne. Thus many poor soules use *the means* as *Mediators*, and so fall short of Christ. A gracious heart doth not onely *pray*, and *heare*, and *receive*, and use all possible meanes to obtaine Christ, but he is restlesse and unsatisfied till he enjoy and possesse Christ in the meanes: Hee rests not upon the bare perfor-

mance of any duty, neither thinkes by vertue of any of his endeavours, to obtaine a part in Christ.

— I will expresse this particular more fully in this manner. A rich Vsurer that is sicke of some disease, tell him such a Physician can cure him, but hee stands upon state, hee will not come without a great deale of charge: Charge (saith hee) I doe not stand upon that; I have money enough by mee, *that* will fetch him hither. Such a man now placeth all his confidence in his money. So when the soule sees, the guilt of ~~sinne~~ is not removed, and *Conscience* is still snarling, and the *Law* con-

condemning him, and Christ is the onely Saviour, that can satisfie and cure all. But how shall Christ be procured? Why his *prayer*, and *fasting*, and *performances* wil command him, by the power and merit of the worke done, though he hath no *promise* for it, and so by resting on his owne performances, fals short of Christ and salvation.

Oh, saith a poore sinner, I would goe out of my selfe, and I see I rest upon my duties, but I cannot get out of my selfe.

I answer, it is Sathans subtilty to keepe us in our selves here too, by endeavouring to make us goe out

Object.

Ans.

Self-denial
what it is.

out of our selves by our owne strength; and this is a marvellous depth of malice and cunning in the devill, when he makes us beleeve, (and we out of ignorance are deluded) that we have power in our owne hands to goe out of our selves; no, it is a supernaturall worke, and the same hand must bring us out of our selves, that must bring us to Christ: This is in truth *selfe-denyall*, when the soule knoweth it hath nothing, and therefore is over-powred with the mighty hand of God, and the worke of his Spirit; so that the poore sinner doth not so much as expect any power or ability in himselfe

selfe, or from the creature,
 in the doing of any duty ;
 he knowes he is dead, and
 therefore cannot help him-
 selfe, much lesse can the
 creature doe him good,
 and therefore he lookes to
 heaven, and seeks all suffi-
 ciency from God alone.
 For (observe it) whiles
 that I thus thinke with my
 selfe, that I have ability to
 goe out of my selfe, I doe
 not then say, that I have a
 principle within me to de-
 ny my selfe, which is quite
 contrary, for to deny a
 mans selfe, is to know that
 he hath no power in him-
 selfe to doe any spirituall
 duty : therefore wee must
 looke onely to the voyce
 of Christ, and know, that
 he

hee that cals us from the wayes of darknesse, and from our selves, must also bring us to Christ; therefore expect power from Christ to plucke thee out of thy selfe, and to make thee beleewe, for the same hand doth worke both.

I would not have a poore creature thinke thus with himselfe, If this meanes, and these Ordinances will doe mee no good, and will not worke upon my heart, I shall never have it; but speak thus unto God, and say, In trath Lord I expect no power from my selfe, nor from the meanes, but my resolution is, to looke up to him that hath hid his face from
from

from *Iacob*, I will not look inward here for power, to receive it from within my selfe, nor to the Minister, nor to the meanes, but I will wait upon thee Lord, and looke up to thy power to worke by the meanes. *Who is amongst you that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voyce of his servants, that walketh in darknesse, and hath no light of comfort, let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himselfe upon his God.* When all other things in the world fail, let the soul then look up to the Lord, and looke out from it selfe; this is the fittest time of all to meet with God; I would have a Christian chuse this time above all

Esa. 50. 10.

all times to meete his Saviour in, and this is the onely time to disappoint Sathan; for, as I said before, it is the last refuge that the devill hath, and if he misse this opportunity, hee is for ever conquered. Thus the sinner partly seeing the beauty of grace, will not, and partly seeing the basenesse of his owne heart, dares not come to Christ.

Object.

Then in the next place it is want of sense and feeling, which he would have, and cannot finde; therefore the distressed soule saith, Alas, I never knew what it was to have the assurance of Gods love, I never received any evidence

Sa-
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dence of Gods favour, and shall I thinke that I have faith? they that beleeve have their hearts filled with joy unspeakeable and glorious; the Word reveales this: but I am a stranger to that joy, how can I then thinke that I have any worke of faith wrought in me?

I answer, this doth not hinder either that thou hast not faith, or that thou hast not come to God by beleeving, therefore remember these three particulars.

First, thou must not thinke to have joy and refreshing before thou goe to the promise, but thou must looke for it, when thou doest

Ans.

I

doest chew and feed upon the promise: thou wouldst have the Lord to give thee all the bargaine before thou make the match: This joy is a fruit that proceeds from *faith* after much wrestling; it doth not follow from faith at the first; first beleeve, and then joy; the heart is never filled with joy before beleeving; but afterwards when thou hast had the sweete dew of the comfort of the promise many a day, then looke for this joy.

2

Secondly, know that these joyes, and this sense and feeling may be absent from faith: a man may have a good faith, and yet want the relish and sweetness

nesse which he longs after. A man may want his desires, and yet want neither life nor heate: A tree may want leaves and fruit, and yet want neither sapp nor moysture: A mans faith may bee somewhat strong, when his feeling is nothing at all: *David* was justified and sanctified, and yet wanted this joy; and so *Iob* rested upon God when hee had but little feeling, as when hee saith, *Thou makest mee a But to shoot at; yet I will trust in thee, though thou kill mee.* Therefore build not your comfort upon sense and feeling, but goe to the promise.

Thirdly, the Saints of
God

Iob 3.15.

Psal. 77.

God many times are deprived of comfort, not because God with-holds it, but because they put it from themselves, and will not have it, though he offer it; as *David*, *My soule refused comfort*, like a fullen child that will not eate his Milke, because hee hath it not in the golden dish; so because God doth not for you what you would, you will have nothing at all. These are the maine hinderances: I might adde many more, for carnall reason is very fruitfull this way, and we through our own folly, and the Devils, subtilty, are apt to abuse things, and make them hinderances in our way to eter-

eternall happinesse. I come now to the cures of all our impediments, for if we had the wisdom and care wee should have, wee might breake through them all, and come to Christ. The means are especially foure, whereby wee may bee inwardly fortified against them, and at last bee able to overcome them.

The first cure and helpe is this, We must not looke too long, nor pore too much, or unwarrantably upon our own corruptions, so farre as to bee feared or disheartened from coming to the riches of Gods grace; for this is an everlasting truth, that whatsoever sight of sin unfits a man
for

Helpes to
come to
Christ.

True god-
ly sorrow
what it is.

for mercy, when hee may take it, and it is offered to him ; that sight of sin is ever sinfull, though it have never so faire a pretence of sorrow and deep humiliation : as we thinke many times, Had I a soule so thoroughly humbled, and bruised, and so forth. The devill oft keeps us in sin, by poring upon our sinnes; when we thinke hereby to bee carryed from our sins ; that course thus is a sinfull course. Tell not me of sorrow, and repentance, and humiliation, all that sorrow and Humiliation is nought that keeps a man from receiving mercy, when it is offered; see this in *Abraham*, hee had this pro-

promise, that hee should have a son in his old age; *He being not weake in faith, regarded not his old age, or deadnesse, nor the barrennesse of Sarahs wombe, but beleaved in him who had promised it,* and there he rests and stayes; hee saw his body was dead, yet there was a living promise; and what though *Sarahs* womb was barren, yet the promise was fruitfull; he knew his owne deadnesse and her barrennesse, but hee considered them not: so wee must see our sinnes, and consider our many weaknesses, but never so settle our selves with, or consider of them so, as to be hindered from comming to God
for

Rom. 4. 19.

for mercy, which he freely offers us, and wee stand in need of; for while the soule of a man is daily plodding upon his owne misery, and distempers, these two things follow.

I

First, wee stop the streame of Gods promise, and let downe the sluice against it, so that the promise cannot come into our soules.

2

And secondly, we set open the streame and flood gate of corruption, and make it to runne most violently in upon us, and in the end to overwhelm us, and the inconvenience arising hereby, will slay the best Christian in the world; for what can a man

get

ger out of his corruption; hee can have no more thereof than is there to be had; it is in vaine to looke for comfort where it is not to be had; it may dishearten us; but never encourage us. See the humility and wisdom of the woman of *Canaan*, shee followes Christ, but he listens not to her, but gives her the repulse, and calls her *dogge*, and saith, You *Gentiles* are *dogges*; and the Gospell of Grace and salvation is the *Childrens bread*. Now if she had only considered the words of Christ, and only looked into her owne basenesse, shee had never come to receive mercy and comfort,

Mar. 15. 27

C

but

but she saith, Truth Lord,
I am as a *dogge*, yet the *dogs*
eate of the crummes that fall
from their Masters Table.

There are two things here
which doe expresse the
frame of a gracious heart
that is truly wise, to at-
tend to its owne basenesse,
her *humility* and *wisedome*;
as if shee had said, Thou
saist I am a *Gentile*, and a
Dogge, I confesse it, yet
though I am a Dog, I will
not goe out of the doores,
but lye under the table for
mercy; so wee must and
ought, when our corrupti-
ons come in upon us, and
wee see our selves damned
creatures, let us then say,
In truth, Lord, I am as bad
as thy word can speak: yet
ler

let us not flye away from
mercy, but lye at the feete
of our Saviour.

It is fit, and wee ought
to see our finnes, but stay
not too long here; see thy
finnes thou must, but not
bee settled thereon, so as to
be kept from Christ; that
sight of sinne which doth
not drive a man to Christ
for mercy, is ever sinfull.
Labour therefore to see
thy finnes, thus:

First, see thy finnes till
thou see them odious and
loathsome.

How to
see sinne
aright.

Secondly, till thou see
an utter insufficiency in
thy selfe to satisfie for
them.

Thirdly, till thou hast
scene an absolute necessity

of Christ to succour thee ;
 and then away speedily to
 the throne of Grace, and
 dwell no longer on thy
 finnes, for *there* is pardon
 enough to remove the
 guilt that sin hath brought
 upon thy soule, *there* is
 power enough to make
 thee master thy corrupti-
 ons. Indeed every soule
 should say thus, It is true
 Lord, my finnes are many
 and great, for I have de-
 parted from thee the foun-
 taine of blisse : But shall I
 goe on yet further from
 thee; and persist in evill ?
 God forbid. All this while
 I speake to broken-hearted
 Christians. You prophane
 ones, you have your por-
 tion already, and shall have
 more

more afterwards, therefore a while stand you by, and let the Children come to their share.

The L O R D looks to him that is of an humble and contrite heart, and that trembles before him. A poore creature cannot but observe every word, and tremble at every truth. Here is salvation indeed (saith hee) but it is not mine, here is mercy, but I have no part in it; and so hee shakes at the apprehension, concluding certainly I shall never enjoy it. Now marke what the Text saith, *The Lord looks at such a trembling soule*, that is, he casts sweet inimations of his goodnesse and kindenesse

Esa 66.2.
Opened.

upon him, and said h, Thou poore trembling sinner, to thee bee it spoken, I have an eye towards thee in the Lord Iesus Christ.

Esa. 40. 2.

Comfort yee, comfort yee my people, (saith the Lord) speake comfortably to Ierusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, and her iniquity is pardoned: tell Ierusalem she is accepted, tell her what my mind is. So the LORD saith to his Ministers, Speake to the heart of such an humbled penitent sinner, tell him from Me, tell him from Heaven, tell him from the Lord Iesus Christ, tell him from under the hand of the Spirit, his person is accepted, and his finnes are
done

done away, and he shall be looked upon in mercy.

Ephraim is the picture of a soule truly humbled, in whom wee may see the behaviour of a true penitent towards God, and Gods dealing towards him. The text saith, *Surely I have heard Ephraim be- meaning himselfe* (there's the heart broken and thirsting) *thou hast chastised mee, and I was chastised, turne thou to me, and I shall be turned; thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned I repented, and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh, I was ashamed, yea even confounded because I did beare the reproach of my youth. As if the sinner*

Jer. 31. 18
19, 20

should say, I am the wretch that have seene all the meanes of grace in abundant measure, and yet never profited under the same. The Lord hath corrected me, but I would not be tamed; He hath instructed mee, but I would not learne. Lord turne mee, Thou art my God; I have nothing in my selfe; Nay, now I see the evils which before I never perceived; And I observe the basenesse of my course now, which before I never considered; And I am ashamed of my abuse of grace revealed, I am even confounded in the sense of those abominations which my soule hath harboured.

This

This is the mourning of a poore sinner; Now marke Gods answer: *Ephraim is my sonne, hee is a pleasant Childe, for since I spake a- gainst him, I doe earnestly re- member him still, therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I will sure have mercy upon him.* As who should say, I observed all those secret sighes, I considered all those teares, I heard all those prayers, and tooke notice of all those com- plaints; and my bowels earne towards this poore sinner, that seekes to mee for mercy. And the truth is, I will embrace him with my loving kindnesse.

Now the second meanes of cure is this, take heed

2. Helpe.

The danger of
judging
our selves
rashly.

of judging thy estate by carnall reason without the rule, as thus it is the fashion of poore distressed spirits, to passe fearefull sentence upon themselves upon groundlesse arguments, and to say, I never found it, I feele no such thing, and I feare it is not so. Thus we heare those carnall pleas which Satan helpes us to invent, and wee judge our selves by them: Now, I say, take heed of this, and make conscience of this same, as of any other sinne of swearing, stealing, whoring, or murder, for this is as truely a sinne, as those, though not so great; nay, it is a farre greater sin than you imagine. Consider this

this you humble-hearted Christians, for to you I speake; for when upon these grounds thou concludest thy case and estate is naught, see against how many Commandements thou sinnest. First, thou dishonourest God and the worke of his grace; in denying that which G O D hath done for thee, and speak'st *unreverently* against God; thou art a *murderer*, and woundest thy owne soule; thou robbest thy selfe of comfort, and art a *thief*; and thou bearest *false witnesse* against thine owne hearr, yea against Christ and his Spirit, and the worke of grace wrought in thee, and joynest with
the

the devill against the Lord
Christ.

But thou wilt say, I
speake as I thinke. That
hinders not, but that thou
bearest false witness; as
wee see, if a man affirme
such a one is a drunkard,
and knowes it not, this
man beares false witness,
because though the man
bee a drunkard, yet hee
knowes it not: so thou
sayest thou hast nothing,
when as thou doest onely
feare it, and suspect it, and
the like: I speake this the
rather because of the sin-
full distemper that creepes
in upon the hearts of ma-
ny broken-hearted Chri-
stians, that out of a selfe-
willed roade of carnall rea-
son,

son, and a vile haunt that they have got, their hearts are perswaded that they doe well to doe so, and they are never well except they doe thus.

But such as these (marke it) when reason is plaine, and the Scriptures are evidently against them, they doe not so much attend what the Minister saith, but they stand and invent how they may answer the Minister, and so put away their owne comforts. Let the feare of God fall upon every soule that heares this, and know, that howsoever you have taken leave to your selves, and have taken up pleas against the truth, yet now goe
your

Ps. 119. 37.

your wayes, and mourne for it, and wonder that the Lord hath not taken away all the comfort of his grace, and all the motions of his *Spirit* from you. The Prophet *David* prayes the Lord to *turne away his eyes from beholding vanity*: now if God must doe that, then much more must hee turn away our hearts from attending to vanities: I must attend to God, and he voyce of his *Spirit*, but to listen to those carnall pleas which I have no warrant to doe, I sinne deeply, and hurt my owne soule dangerously thereby. No man would deale with a Cheator; carnall reason is a cheator, therefore

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fore let us not attend ther-
to, unlesse wee resolve to
bee cozened; and if the
danger of the sinne cannot
make us doe this, then let
the sorrow that will come
by it, constraîne us: *Behold
all you that kindle a fire,
and that compasse your selves
about with the sparkles
that yee have kindled, this
shall you have at my hand,
ye shall lie downe in sorrow.*
I will shew what is meant
by *sparkles*, and what by
fire; in the old Law you
know there was heavenly
fire continually in the San-
ctuary, that shadowed out
to us the will and wisdom
of God in his Word: but
there was also strange fire,
that is, there were divers
spar-

Isa. 50. 11.

sparkles of their *owne* imaginations, and conceits; every poore creature carries his tinder-box about him, and hee is ever kindling of it; which the Lord doth not allow of: In that text are two things: first, that the heart of man will naturally invent carnall reasons and pleas against it selfe, and be settled upon them: Secondly, the issue that followes thereon, This shall yee have of mine hand, you shall lie downe in your *owne* sorrow. When the Scriptures are cleare, and reasons are evident, and yet you will have your *owne* devices, thus much I tell you, you shall lie downe in sorrow
at

drawne unto Christ.

63

at last, and you may thank
your selves for it; away
with your tinder-boxes
therefore, abase your selves
before the throne of grace
and be at length wise to sal-
vation.

*No every one that thirst-
eth* (saith God by his Pro-
phe) *come and buy without
money, take of the well of the
water of life, and live for
ever freely.* Many a poore
Minister would faine leave
his commodity behinde
him, and saith, You must
have it, and you shall have
it; it is your portion, and
belongs of right unto you;
wee are even faine to force
G O D S favours upon the
soule. We beseech you to
beleeve, and wee intreate
you

you for the Lord Iesus sake
to receive mercy and hum-
ble your hearts.

But will any man take
these favours?

No beloved, many sweet
promises, and many ad-
mirable precious things
of grace and salvation are
revealed, but men neither
passe, nor care to receive
benefit by them. Some
carnal plea or other evades
all. This argues plainly
your small estimation of
CHRIST. A poore hun-
gry sinner that is appre-
hensive of his owne weak-
nesse and feeblenesse, longs
till the *feast day* commeth,
that hee may partake of
these delicacies : Oh how
carefully will he listen, and
how

how diligently will hee attend what the Minister saith; and if the Word comes home to his conscience inlightning his heart, and reprovng him of his secret corruption, he cries out, I am in great trouble, good Lord comfort me: I am full of doubts, good Lord resolve mee: I am ignorant in spirituall things, good Lord teach me: I have a proud, stout, stubborne heart, good Lord humble me. Take this for a generall rule, A good heart is alwayes at best ease, when the Word works most. But a wicked gracelesse person is then best, when the Word workes least upon him.

There.

Therefore when he thinks the Minister will come close to his soule, hee will not bee at home that day, he will be sure to be out of Towne, hee knowes the word would awaken him, and affright him, and hee cannot beare the blow, therefore he keepes away, and shunneth the hearing of Gods word, which would worke upon him.

3. Helpe.

But thirdly, let us bee marvellously wary and watchfull that wee enter not into the lists of dispute with Sathan, upon those points which are beyond the reach of man; as thus to say, I am not elected, therefore GOD will not doe me good, it is
vaine

vaine for mee to use the
meanes; my time of mer-
cy is gone, oh the day of
grace that I have seene,
the Lord knocked sweet-
ly, and was pleased to re-
veale my finnes at such a
time; but then hard-hear-
ted wretch that I was, I
shut the doore of my
heart against the L O R D
Iesus Christ, and now it is
gone and past, now there
is no hope for ever of re-
ceiving mercy againe: If
the devill get thee here, all
thy comfort is gone, for
upon this ground a man
shall never receive rest to
his heart while the world
stands; for if no man can
ever know the thing, how
shall I be able to give, or
any

any man to take comfort? Looke as it is with a poore travelling man that lighteth among theeves, who come and promise to cary him a nearer way, and at last they bring him into a wood where no passengers come, and there they doe what they will with him: so it is with a poore soule, when the Devill gets him into these secret disputes of Gods eternall counsell, there are no passengers come this way, therefore thou art voyd of succour, and Satan may exercise his pleasure in terrifying thy poore soule. Therefore for your direction in this case, observe three rules.

I

First, let the soule in this
case

case stay it selfe upon the
al-mightinesse of the pow-
er of God, *I am God all-*
sufficient : if thou art per-
swaded of the all-suffici-
ency of G O D, this will
helpe thee : God can doe
more than thou canst think
Hee is able, and will doe
thee good, though thou
know it not ; and there-
fore observe thus much,
the soule never doubts of
Gods will, but it doubts of
his power also in some
measure.

Secondly, check thine
owne heart for meddling
with Gods secrets, and
prying into his hidden
counsels ; let no man goe
beyond his bounds : it ap-
pertaines not to thee to
dive

Gen. 17. 1.

Deut. 29.

29

I Cor. 1.

2, 16.

Ion 4-19

dive into this mystery. Secret things belong to God, but revealed things belong to us; and Who hath knowne the mind of God? saith Paul. Mark this, you that will be going up into the skies to know what Gods' secret minde is, keeps your stations wisely, for the Devill and all the devils in hell never knew the minde of the Lord. When *Ionas* cried against *Niniveh*, saying, Within forty daies all you drunkards, and adulterers shall be destroyed: Marke there how the King stayes himselfe, saying, Who can tell if the Lord will repent and stay his fierce wrath that we perish nor. When the Devill tels thee thus,

and

and faith, G O D hath appointed a way to salvation, and you have had the meanes, and did not profit by them, therefore G O D will never shew you mercie, nor give you grace: how can the Devill tell that? nay, all the Devils in hell cannot tell; let mee walke in that course which God hath appointed, and commanded, and doe that which I ought, and let me say, who knowes but God may breake the heart of a proud rebellious sinner, none but God knowes it.

Thirdly, Measure not the riches of G O D s love, and the sweetnesse of his grace, according to your owne conceits, and doe not

D think

Esa. 55.7,
8, 9,

thinke that because you cannot conceiue it, therefore God will not doe it : *Let the wicked forsake his wayes, and the unrighteous man his thoughts,* saith the Prophet; that is, All you wicked ones, and you that have lived lewdly, returne from your wicked wayes, and from your vaine imaginations, for he wil abundantly pardon.

Object.

But will the Lord pardon all my finnes, saith the soule, I cannot thinke it, if I were a God, I should neuer passe by such intolerable things.

Answer.

And because you cannot, you thinke God cannot: Yes, saith the Lord, I can abundantly pardon,
for

for my thoughts are not
your thoughts, nor my
wayes as your wayes. A
poore creature thinkes his
sinnes are unpardonable,
and he shall never get assu-
rance of Gods love; You
are *men*, saith the Lord,
and have finite thoughts,
but I am G O D, and have
mercy infinitely, when you
thinke I have no mercy.

But there were never
any such received to mer-
cy, saith the soule, and
therefore why should I be
the man?

When C H R I S T had
wrought many strange
miracles, the people said,
there were never any such
thinges done in Israel; and
therefore it is plaine, God

Da can

Ob.

Ans.

Iob 9.10.

can doe things that never were done the like: *Hee doth great things past finding out, and wondrous without number*, saith Iob: therefore judge not Gods power and love by what thou canst conceive.

The best Christians are most suspicious of themselves, and none fuller of doubts and feares, than those that have least cause to feare their estates are bad. Sathan makes it his chiefe worke to grieve and terrifie these. And their owne distrustfull hearts are alwayes raising false surmises, and putting mer- cie from them, as if they were hired by the Devill, to take his part in pleading
against

against themselves. Therefore it is worth our observing what *David* saith, *Psa. 42. The Lord shall command his loving kindnesse in the morning.* It is a phrase taken from *Princes* & great *Cōmanders*, whose words are a law. So God wil send forth his loving-kindnesse to a truely humbled Christian with a *Command.* As if he should say, *Goe love and everlasting mercy,* take thy *Cōmission*, & I charge thee goe to that poore broken-hearted sinner, goe to that poore hungry, and thirsty soule; goe and prosper, and prevaile, and settle my love upon his heart, whether hee will or no. Thus the *L O R D* charges

D 3 his

Psa. 42. 18.

his loving-kindnesse to do good to poore finners, and by his owne Almightynes stayeth the soule, when it is ready to sinke under the burthen of its transgressions.

Ob.

What, shall I have mercy? No, No, (saith the doubting heart.) Will the Lord Iesus accept me? No surely. Could I pray so, and had I these parts, and could I performe duties after this and this manner, then there were some hope, but alas, there is no mercy for mee.

Answ.

Let me tell thee, who ever thou art, God invites thee in particular, and all the sweetnesse in Christ, and his precious promises, apper-

appertaine to thy soule,
and thou hast as great an
interest in them, as any
servant of God in the
world whatsoever.

No, No, saith the trem-
bling soule, I cannot be-
leeve it; such a wretch as
I goe to heaven? It cannot
bee; Heaven shall rather
fall, than I come there.
Thus the discouraged sin-
ner knocks off mercy, and
shuts the doore against
himselfe.

Now when all carnall
reasonings, and high ima-
ginations, (as *Paul* calls
them) have raised up
strong holds against mer-
cy and comfort; when the
Word cannot for the pre-
sent settle peace in the
D 4 soule

Object.

soule, G O D is faine at last to *command* loving kindnesse, and send him with a Commission from heaven, saying, I charge you, break open the doore of the heart of such a sinner, rend that vayle of ignorance that is before his eyes, silence all his doubts and feares; And I charge you goe home to that soule, and cheare it, refresh it with the sense of my favour, and fill it with the assurance of my love.

Rom. 5.8.

Whilest we were enemies, saith the Apostle, *Christ died for us.* The Lord sends from heaven to a poore miserable creature, Commend my love, commend my mercy to such a distressed

stressed soule, and tell him though hee hath beene an enemy to mee, yet I am a friend to him. Tell him though hee hath beene a Traytour to mee, I have beene a good King to him. Hee hath beene a rebell to mee, but tell him I have beene a loving GOD to him. Tell him his sinnes are pardoned, his person accepted, and his soul shall bee saved. Tell him his sighes and groanes are heard, and his prayers observed in heaven; let him know that the Lord Iesus dyed for sinners when they were sinners. Make this good to his soule I charge you before you come back.

Therefore the fourth

D 5: cure

Helpe.

cure is this, and it is specially to be observed above all in thy proceeding with thy selfe in judgment; that is, passe no sentence against thy soule, but according to the evidence of the Word: if thou art to be approved, let the Word of God approve thee, and let his word examine thee, if thou art to be examined; if the Word speake for thee, it is no matter though all men and Angels speak against thee; and if the Word condemn thee, it is no matter who speakes for thee: what though some wrangling rayler step in, and will be determining the causes before the Iudge comes; yet

a wise man will stay till the Iudge comes, and wait his leisure. Deale thou so with thine owne soule, put not the case to be tryed by a company of peevish carnal reasons, but stay til the Word come, and judge thy selfe by that, and hold to that for ever. *The light is that which manifesteth all things*; the meaning is this, the light of the Word, and the evidences of Gods truth manifested to the soules of Gods people; all sense and feeling of carnal reasoning, are like fogges and mists, which make a man that he cannot see the way; but bring him to the light, & then his state and condikion will bee manifested

Eph. 5. 13.

Mat. I 1. 21

fested what it is. *Learne of me*, (saith our Saviour) *and you shall finde rest to your soules* : And the Psalmist saith, *I will enquire what the Lord will say* : so say thou, I will not hearken what carnall reason will say. The want of this is the cause why we have so many distractions, and disquietments, and are still in doubtings, because hee that teacheth us is a deluder.

For the poore soule saith, What, shall I have an interest in Christ, shall I have title to the promises? nay, this belongs to those that are broken-hearted : indeed if I had such power against corruption, such heavenly mindednesse,
and

and this and that, there were some hopes, but I am so full of weaknesse, and many times led captive by my rebellious heart; that it is too apparent I never had saving grace, nay, I feare I never shall have it truly wrought in my soule.

But who told you so, and where learned you this Religion? I am sure you never learned it of CHRIST. Who, or what word tels you, If I have such corruptions, I shall never have grace? not the word of Christ, I am sure: wherefore I charge you, hold to the truth of the word; Learne of *me*, saith Christ, and put not your cause to bee decided by
car-

carnall reason, nor hearken what it telleth you; for if you take that course, you shall never come to Christ whilst the world standeth. Learn of the Lord Christ, for his Word is faithfull, and his promise sure, and there you shall finde rest as strong as Mount-Sion; it is that Word whereby thou shalt be judged at the great day, when sense and feeling shall be cast out for wranglers, & never come into Court. Thus much of the foure cures; I will now propound foure rules how a man may order himselfe aright in this course, so that he may repaire to the Word at all times, as he ought to doe,
and

and gaine evidence there
for establishing his heart
in peace and tranquillity.

*Rules to direct a Christian
how to use the Word of
God for the evidence of
his assurance.*

Rule 1.

First, to use the Word of
God aright as thou must
in all conditions that con-
cerne thy soule repaire to
the Word, so thou must
consider thine owne up-
rightnesse, and what work
of grace is in thy soule,
that will answer the Word,
and testifie that the worke
of grace is true: be sure to
take thy soule at the best;
doe not alwayes consider
what is the worst part in
thee,

thee, nor thy failings that may accuse thee only, but if there bee any uprightnesse that may speake for thee, heare that also; It is injustice for any Court to heare one side and not another: the Lord doth not lye at catch with his children, but hee takes them at the best: as *Rom. 4. 22.* it is said that *Abraham beleeveth the promise, and it was imputed to him for righteousness*; yet in the 12. of *Gen.* we see he had some doubtings, but God tooke him at the best, and so records this of his faith. So we see that *Sarah* is spoken of as a gracious woman, and a patterne for women in calling her Husband LORD, which

1 Pet. 3. 6.
Gen. 18. 12

which was a signe of an humble heart; but yet wee reade that shee derided the message of the Lord by the Angell; yet notwithstanding the Lord buries that, and onely mentions the other in the commendations of her. Now as the Lord deales with his servants, so must wee deale with our selves, whatloever is found sincere and upright, observe that as well as the other, nay rather before the other. If a man should have his cause handled in any Court after this fashion, and they should only observe the failings in this cause, the best cause may happily go against a man, therefore
the

the Court will heare all read; as if any Bond or Bill come in, or any matter of agreement, they will heare all: if a man have an Indenture, and the Lawyer onely open, and reads the failings in it, and that which seems to make against any party, if the Iudge onely heare that, it must needes goe against him, and therefore the man saith, Good my Lord heare all: and when they finde it written that such a debt is paid, and the party satisfied, then the cause goes well; whereas if they had heard only the first part, and not the second, hee had lost all. So, many bring in great inditelements
against

against themselves, and
say, Oh what pride and
stubbornnesse is in my
heart, Oh how weake am
I, and dull, and dead, and
backward to holy duties?
How carelesse of enjoying
communion with God?
How negligent in sifting
and trying my own heart,
in watching over my sen-
ses, and mourning in se-
cret for my daily failings?
It is true, but art thou not
troubled with these, and
is it not the greatest greife
of thy soule that lyes upon
thee? yea, saith the poore
soule, I confesse my heart
is weary of these, and I
could be content to bee a-
ny thing, that I could not
bee thus: now take thy
soule

soule on this side, and heare the best part: as it is with a mans hand and the staffe, I compare the promise to a staffe, you know the backe of a mans hand cannot take hold of the staffe, but let him turne the palme of his hand to the staffe, and then hee can take it: so turne thou the right side of thy soule to the promise, and then thou maist take it; but we turne the backe-side of our hearts to the promise, when the soule saith, Oh my stubbornnesse is great, and mine inabilities and corruptions are many; this is the wrong-side of thine heart, and this will ever hinder thee from taking hold

hold of the promise; but thy soule hates these, and is weary of them; this is the right side of the heart, turne that to the promise.

Secondly, labour to have thy conscience settled and established in that truth which now out of the Word thou hast gotten, to beare witnesse of the work of grace in thee; for if there bee any want of the assurance of Gods love, and if the evidence of the worke of grace come not powerfully in upon thy heart, but there is some guilt of sinne still remaining, then conscience will breed new broyles, and continually nip and dis-

quiet

Rule. 2.

quiet the heart; therefore as wee must have our judgment informed by the Word, that there is some good in us, so wee must get conscience perswaded of it, that conscience may speake for us: as the debtor if he be indebted to many creditors, he must agree with all; for if hee agree with all save one, that *one* may imprison him as well as all the rest: So it is with the poore distressed soule that lyes at the mercy of the Lord, and is so deepe in arerages, that he cannot helpe himselfe, he must labour to still conscience, that it doe not accuse him, but be on his side.

The

The want of this is the
cause why new sutes and
new bills are daily put up
against us, onely because
conscience is not pacified:
take a poore sinner that
hath al his doubts and ob-
jections answered; come to
him, and say, Are all these
all your doubts and ob-
jections? yes: and are they
all answered? yes: and
have you now any thing
to say against that which
hath beene made knowne
unto you? no not now:
Say to him againe, Did
your conscience say to
you, It is a sinne to say you
have no grace? Now here
hee demurres and stayes,
and saith, No, I dare not
say so, but I rather say the
con-

contrary. Marke this, all the bookes are crost, and all objections answered, and yet conscience puts in a new plea, because it was not satisfied.

Now come to him againe, and say, You are sometimes captived by sinne, but you are willing to bee at Gods disposing, and that hee should plucke away all those corruptions, are you not ?

Oh saith the poore sinner, I must needs yeeld to that; then I affirme to thy soule, this is a work of true grace: therefore let conscience bee fully satisfied, and cancell all self-accusations; this will cleare the heart, and cast out all cavils

vills that come in against us : For if our consciences condemn us not , then wee have boldnesse towards God: we must mark conscience, and be convinced, that it is a sinne to say, God hath not wrought this work of grace in our hearts : for though sense and feeling be sometimes gone , yet cōscience remembers the day and yeare when hee had a cleare evidence of Gods love, and saith, Lord thou knowest it, and thou didst say out of thy Word at such a time that my heart was upright and sincere in thy sight.

It should bee with a poore sinner, as it is with a wise man when he would

E make

make his lands sure unto him and his posterity by evidences and writings, he is not content onely to have his evidences in his owne keeping, but will have them enrolled in Chancery, such a yeare, and such a day, that if he should lose his deeds, he may be sure to finde them againe there: so it should be with a distressed soule, wee should not onely be content to have all our objections answered, but get them recorded in the Court of *Conscience*, that when sense and feeling is lost, yet wee may readily goe to the court of *Conscience*, and there finde the day and yeare when Gods
love

love was made sure to us.

Thirdly, we should strive mightily to have our hearts over-powred with the evidence which reason and conscience makes good to us, that so we may quietly receive it, and calmly welcome it, and yeeld and subject our hearts to the truth. But here wee all sticke, for there are three things in the soul of a man which maintaine these quarrels and oppositions against the evidence of the Word: 1. Reason objects: 2. Conscience accuseth: 3. The Will of man will not submit: and we finde it in experience that when a man hath stilled conscience, and answer-

Rule. 3.

red all reasons, yet the
stubbornesse of the heart
maintaines a gaine-saying
against the truth, and
keepe the old quarrell
that hath beene answered
long agoe, and that a man
would thinke had beene bu-
ried long since. It is in this
case with a poore sinner,
as it is with a man that
hath a contentious adver-
sary; happily the cause
that they two have in
hand hath beene tryed in
all the Courts of England,
and at last comes to Chan-
cery, and there it is con-
cluded against him, so that
all things are settled and
ended, as a man would
thinke, and an honest man
would sit downe and bee
quiet:

quiet: but the other being
a quarrellsome fellow, will
not yeeld yet, but to the
old law he will againe, and
he will sell all he hath but
he will have his will, till
at the last the Iudge comes
to take notice of this man,
and casts out the cause,
and puts him in prison, and
saith, These things were
all answered, and the cause
ended long agoe.

Must so for all the world
is it with the heart of a
gracious man that is hum-
bled in some measure, and
could be content to yeeld
to the credit of Gods
Word, and to the witnesse
of his conscience, & saith,
My condition is better
than I thought it was

red all reasons, yet the stubbornesse of the heart maintaines a gaine-saying against the truth, and keeps the old quarrell that hath beene answered long agoe, and that a man would thinke had beene buried long since. It is in this case with a poore sinner, as it is with a man that hath a contentious adversary; happily the cause that they two have in hand hath beene tryed in all the Courts of England, and at last comes to Chancery, and there it is concluded against him, so that all things are settled and ended, as a man would thinke, and an honest man would sit downe and bee quiet:

quiet: but the other being
a quarrellsome fellow, will
not yeeld yet, but to the
old law he will againe, and
he will sell all he hath but
he will have his will; till
at the last the Iudge comes
to take notice of this man,
and casts out the cause,
and puts him in prison, and
saith, These things were
all answered, and the cause
ended long agoe.

Must so for all the world
is it with the heart of a
gracious man that is hum-
bled in some measure, and
could be content to yeeld
to the credit of Gods
Word, and to the witnesse
of his conscience, & saith,
My condition is better
than I thought it was

but there is an old proud self-willed heart that will not be quiet, but still is quarrellsome, and maintaines the old quarrell; Though reasons are all confuted, and conscience beares witnesse against him, and every Minister casts out the cause; yet observe it, a poore distressed sinner will keepe the old objections, & though they were answered the night before, yet hee will have them fresh the next morning, and the next moneth, even when a man would think he should not dare to come in Court; and the mischief lies even here, in a proud self-willed heart that will not yeeld.

yeeld. Therefore labour
to get thy heart so farre
over-powerd with the
authority of the truth,
whatsoever it is that God
reveales to thee for thy
good, and doe not reject
the evidence which God
makes knowne and passeth
upon thy soule for thy e-
verlasting wel-fare, doe
not (I say) reject it : and
because thou hast not that
comfort that thou would-
est, therefore thou wilt
have none at all: it is not
properly because thou
canst not, but because
thou wilt not receive the
promise, that so wracks
and torments thy spirit :
this is it which breeds the
quarrell: and hence it is

that when reason is satisfied, and conscience convinced, aske the soule this question, and say, are you perswaded that the Lord hath done you good, and will shew everlasting mercy to your soule? no (saith he) all the world shal not perswade me of that; Ministers are mercifull, and Christians are charitable, and are loth to discourage mee, as I should doe to them, but did they know me indeed, they would never thinke thus of me, certainly I shall never finde it so: What, I grace? all the world shall never perswade mee to it. Marke what I say, this is meerly thy pride and self-willd-
nesse

nesse that will not receive that good which God is willing to give thee; this hellish and devilish pride of thine wil cost thee dear one day.

But will some say, How is it pride? wee are ever complaining and condemning our selves, this cannot be pride.

Yes, I say it is abominable pride against the Majesty of heaven, and that, I will shew thee two wayes: First, for a man to follow his owne conceits and self-willdnesse against the truth, and the force of reason, and the wirtues of the servants of G O D and his owne conscience, is not this pride?

E 5 Second-

Ob.

Ans.

Secondly, thy pride appeares in this, namely, because thou hast not what thou wouldest, and in that manner and measure thou desirest, and hast not that sweetnesse of grace and conquest over corruption that thou wouldest have, therefore thou stingest away all Gods kindnesse; this is infinite pride. That measure of mercy which God hath already shewed thy soule is incomprehensible, and yet because you cannot have what you would, you will have nothing at all. As a man that hath the Law on his side, and his estate settled on him, yet because his evidences are not written in
great

great huge letters; and in large paper, he throwes them all way: so you have no grace, because you have not so much as you would have; you have no humility, because you have not so much humility: O pride, pride, in the highest degree!

Labour therefore to bring thy heart to this blessed subjection to the truth of God, and make it thy duty as well to receive comfort when God offers it upon good grounds, as to doe a duty commanded; and know that it is a sinne to reject mercy when God offers it, as to kill a man which God hath forbidden.

den; and therefore you Saints of God that have beene pestered thus, and have beene enemies to your selves, when your hearts begin to slide away thus, take your hearts, and reason thus with your soules, & say, Good Lord, this is the proud stubborn distemper of this vile heart of mine; what would I have? is not Gods word cleare, and my conscience satisfied? doe not the Ministers of God affirme my state to bee good? and shall I thus dishonour God?

Object.

But what saith the poor soule againe, Must I cate mine owne words, and say I have grace, when before

I

I said I had none?

Yes, and be thankfull to God that thou maist say so too; it is better for you to crosse your owne humours, than crosse Gods Spirit: take notice of it, and feare for ever, lest that proud and stubborne soule of thine, which now refuseth consolation when God offers it, be forced to eate thy flesh, and come upon thy knees, and never get comfort to thy dying day; and though God save thee in the end, yet thou shalt bee as it were in hell upon earth.

One would have thought it had beene humilitie in *Peter* to refuse to let *Christ* wash his feet, but it was nothing

Ans.

Ioh. 13. 8. 9

thing but pride, and therefore Christ takes him up for it sharply, (which is indeed the only way to cure this distemper) *If I wash thee not thou hast no part in me:* if you will needs have your owne humours, and wil not be perswaded, you may get you down to heli with them: *Peter* paused with himselfe a while, but at last when his stomacke came down, then, *Lord, not only my feet, but my hand, & heart and all.* It is humility of heart to take what God offers. Most Christians thinke they are humble-hearted, but they are so farre proud, as they give leave to this distemper: therefore labour to overmaster

master this gaine-saying heart of thine, with the authority of the Word of God, and learne to receive mercy when God offers it, lest he take away the comfort of his Spirit from you, and make you goe howling and roring to your graves. Though he bring you to heaven in the end, yet you may have a hell before you come hither.

The last Rule is this, Maintaine the good word which thy heart hath submitted to, and keepe it as the best treasure under heaven; and when thou hast obtained certaine evidence that thy estate is good, heare nothing against it, but sticke fast to
the

Rule, 4.

the same, regard nothing but out of the Word of God, against that comfort and evidence of thy salvation, which thou hast been perswaded of by the word, if Sathan or carnall reason have any thing to say against thee, let them bring Scripture, and then yeeld to it, but without the word heare nothing. Look as it is with a man that is at law for lands, if he have his adversary on the hip, and have gotten some advantage against him, he will keepe him there, and hold him to the point. If a man will follow every wrangling Lawyer at every impertinent out-flaying, he will never have any good
suc-

successes; it is the fashion of many Attornies rather to breed quarrels, than to end them; and therefore hold to the maine point. Deale with Satan as with a subtile adversary that is full of wiles and fetches. It is the cunning of the enemy to lead you out, and he will have many vagaries, but be sure to hold to that truth which you have received from the evidence of the Word, and the witness of conscience. When a man hath gotten some comfort, then the Devill begins to play the Lawyer in this manner:

*How the soule being tempted
may answer Satans accusations.*

Doest

Satan.

Doest thou not see how weak and poore thou art? how destitute of al saving grace, and how contrary thou walkest to God?

Sinner.

It is true (saith the soule) I am laden with infirmities, yet it is as true that he that cōfesseth & forsaketh his sin, shall have mercy.

Satan.

But (saith the devill) doest thou not see that thou art full of pride, and weaknesse, & secretly unwilling to come to duties?

Sinner.

It is true (saith the soule) I am so, this vile heart of mine is backward to all good, and many unruly lusts beare sway in me, yet I hate and detest this, and therefore shall finde mercy, the word saith so.

But

But (saith the devill) are you of Gods counsell, secret things belög to God?

Satan.

Indeed (saith the soule) I know not what Gods secret wil is, yet this I know, that the Word saith, Hee hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but invites such dayly to come unto him.

Sinner.

But (saith the devill) many cozen themselves, mercy is a great thing, and few obtaine it, and why may not you bee cozened as well as others?

Satan.

But (saith the soule) the Lord will not cozen mee, who alone knowes my heart, & the Word knows what the Lord knowes, on that I relye.

Sinner.

But

Satan.

But (saith the devill) may not you be deceived in the word; the word is true indeed, but how know you that you rightly apply it, and that the word & your heart doth sute together?

Sinner.

Why (saith the soule:) I desire as earnestly to have my sinne purged, as I doe to have it pardoned. I know my heart by the Word, that is the touchstone of my life; therefore to the Word I repaire; the Lord knowes that I hate all sin inwardly; & reform it outwardly, and therefore I know I shall finde mercy: shew me a place of Scripture that saith I doe not rightly apply the Word, & I will beleve it; but

but I wil not beloeve thee,
for thou art a deluder, and
a lyar. Thus hold to the
Word, and the Devill will
bee tired, and goe away:
keepe you here, for if hee
catch you a wandring af-
ter sense and feeling, you
are gone. *Then through thy
Cōmandements hast made
me wiser than mine enemies,*
saith David, for they are
ever with me. Satan is wise;
and the flesh, and carnall
reason, and the world,
are wise, but blessed be our
God that makes every
poore ignorant servant of
his wiser than all these: but
how? the Word must be
ever with them; you must
keep the Word with you
daily, and that will make
you

Ps. 119. 98

you not know onely what is amisse, but get ground against whatsoever hinders your peace.

Satan deales in this with the soule, as the enemy deales in warre; when *Ioshua* defeated the men of *AI*, he got them out of the City, and then they that lay in ambush went and tooke it in, and burnt it with fire: so the Devill doth: Our Castle or City is the promises, and the word, and ordinances of God; now if the devil can but get you out of this Castle, he hath you where he would; if you will look after every bird that flies, and listen after every carnall reason and temptation,

Iosh. 8. 2.

on, you are gone; if hee
once get you from the
promise, he will intangle
you in his snare, and over-
come you.

*Little children, if ye a-
bide in Gods Commande-
ments, ye abide in God, saith
the Apostle: As if he had
said, Children, your ene-
mies are many, and great,
and cunning, therefore keep
home, keepe home, come
not abroad, and then you
shall be safe, whatsoever
troubles arise. It is the fa-
shion of parents, if their
children runne abroad and
catch a knocke, they tell
them that they are well e-
nough served, you might
have kept home when you
had warning.*

1 Joh. 2. 28

The

The issue of this point
is this, Iudge thy soule by
the word, and looke upon
thy sacred part, and let
that beare witnesse for
thee, and what the Word
of God doth evidence to
thee, that maintaine, and
heare nothing against it;
this is the way to receive
constant comfort, and goe
on merrily in our Christi-
an course: let quarrels,
troubles, and temptations
come, yet keepe you with-
in doores, and rest your
selves upon the riches of
Gods free grace in Iesus
Christ, and bee for ever
comforted, and you may
go singing to heaven, and
to your graves, though
you meet with never so
many

Meanes to obtaine an interest in the Promise.

Now I will shew you some Meanes whereby a man may so improve his time, that at last hee may obtaine this blessed estate; which are foure; but before I do begin with them, you must be advertised of thus much, that wee may use the meanes, but there is, no meanes under heaven *alone* will doe it, yet you must waite upon God in the use of the meanes, for it is not the meanes that will worke faith, but the Spirit of God in the use of the meanes; and therefore the Text saith,

F

To

To you it is given to beleewe,
 for faith is the free gift of
 God; it is God that must
 doe it, and yet he will not
 doe it without us, because
 wee are reasonable men
 and women. The Lord
 affords us meanes, and
 therefore wee are to waite
 upon him in the use of
 those meanes; let the Lord
 doe what hee will, and let
 us doe what wee should:
 wee must not thinke when
 we have the meanes, then
 we can get faith presently;
 for, as *Paul* saith, *The same*
power that raised up Iesus
from the dead, must make us
able to beleewe, or else all
 the Angels in Heaven, and
 all the Ministers on earth,
 and all the helpe that men
 and

Ephes. 1.20.

and meanes can doe thee,
will doe thee no good: the
meanes are divers, as hea-
ring and prayer; which are
the Conduits whereby
God communicates faith;
but I let those passe, and
onely fasten upon those
which are needfull for fee-
ble *Christians* to bring
them into this blessed
state, and those are these.

First, we must, as much
as in us lyes, labour to
plucke away all those props
that the soule leanes upon,
and all those outward suc-
cours, and whatsoever
outward contentment it
is, which a poore sinner
doth repaire, and betake
himselke to for reliefe and
helpe, that when all these

i Meanes.

are taken from us, we may be forced to goe for succour there where it is to be had. It is that which remains in the nature of man, and that which is naturall to us all even from our first Parents, that we would have the staffe in our owne hands, and support our owne soules, and supply all those necessities that lye upon us.

Now the way to make the soule leane upon *Christ*, is, to plucke away all other props; for the last thing that wee come to, is the promise, and if we could find good any where else, we would never goe to *Christ*; God heares last of us, and therefore

fore wee should doe with
our selves as the enemy
doth with a City besie-
ged, when he would make
them yeeld, the onely way
is to famish them, cut off
all provison, and stop all
passages that none may
come to relieve them, and
then they will bee forced
to yeeld themselves to the
mercy of the enemy; so it
is with our nature, we are
still trusting to our owne
strength, and relying up-
on something of our own;
therfore famish thy heart,
and cut off all the meanes
and comfort whereby thy
heart may bee succoured,
and thy conscience quic-
ted, and when thy heart
is famished, it will then

seeke to a Saviour, and
lye there, because there is
no other thing to support
it.

The poore woman in
the Gospell had spent all
her goods upon the Phy-
sitians, and if shee had had
but a little meanes left,
yea, but one farthing to-
ken, for any thing I know
shee would never have
goneto Christ; but when
all these failed, then shee
was forced to seeke to
Christ, that was ready and
willing to doe any thing
for her distressed nature:
so our soules must have
something to support
themselves upon, for they
cannot live without some
support. Now therefore
when

when all our carnall hopes are taken away, wee must needs stay upon the promise, because we have nothing else. It is not required that a man should cast away those outward comforts that God affords him, but onely this, that though you have all, yet labour to get your heart to see and acknowledge the emptinesse of all these, and let not the heart seeke too much content in them, for these are all but lying vanities, and broken staves, which will not onely cozen a man, but pierce him too.

Now when the soule seeth these things cannot succour him, but lay him

in the dust, then he will be content to have his heart severed from them. It is with the soule as it was with *Noahs Dove*, when the *Arke* began to rest upon the Mountaine of *Arrarat*, *Noah* sent out the *Dove*, but the *Dove* found no rest for the sole of her foot: No question there were many dead carcases, but the *dove* found no rest till she came to the *Arke* againe; so when a man findes no rest in any thing the creature affords, and can get no footing for the soule to stay it selfe upon them, then it betakes it selfe to *Christ*, and goes home to the promise, and rests there, and expects from thence

thence what is needfull ;
as in the Art of swim-
ming, he that will swimme
must plucke his feete from
the bottome, and commit
himselſe to the ſtreame
to beare him up ; ſo wee
muſt plucke our hearts
from theſe things, & them
from us ; and though wee
have honour and prefer-
ments, yet wee muſt not
put any confidence in
them, but learne by our
beleeving to commit our
ſelves wholly to the pow-
er of the promiſe, and re-
ceive comfort from thence
only.

Let not the gods of this
world, *honour*, and *profit*,
and *pleaſure* deceive thee ;
did the pride of *Pharaohs*

F 5. heart

heart deliver him? did the riches of *Dives* save him? did *Herods* applause that he had, deliver him? did these gods secure them? nay, have they not left them in the lurch? therefore let us take our hearts off from these things, and have a base esteeme of them, and see a vanity, and emptinesse, and insufficiency in them, that wee may bee forced to seeke to Christ, and say as *David* said, *Helpe Lord, for vaine is the helpe of man.* Labour therefore to see the privie pranks of thine own heart, and hunt out all those mazes and turnings and windings of thy spirit, for it is wonderfull to see how the

the soule is ready to hang
her comforts upon every
hedge, and shift and sharke
in every by-corner for
comfort: Now when thou
seest thy heart thus seek-
ing to settle it selfe, plucke
away that prop, and see
the emptinesse of it, and
then thy heart will bee fit
and ready to goe unto
Christ.

Now when this is done
there is a little way made
that the promise may
come to the soule, therefore
labor in the secōd place to
have your hearts possessed
thoroughly, and perswaded
effectually of the fulnesse
of that good which is in
the promise, and of that sa-
tisfactory mercy and free-
nesse

2 Meanes

nesse of the grace of God in *Christ*, that so the soule may bee established with that full content which is to bee had in the riches of the promise. But marke what I say, perswade your heart of it, and content not your selves that you are able to dispute somewhat fully of the excellency of the promise, and of the riches of Gods free grace; What is this to the purpose that the heart knowes this, & yet is fore-stalled that it comes not to the promise: therefore leave not thy heart till it come to make that account of the promise, that the Word saith it is worth; I say, leave not thy heart

heart till thou see the promise of grace most beautiful in thy eye, and that thy heart may gaine some earnest touching the goodnesse of God, & the riches of his grace towards thee; and bring thy heart to know and see, that the promise is better than all the riches and honors that thou canst have, or the world can bestow, *They that know thee, will trust in thee, for thou Lord hast never failed them that seeke thee.* This kinde of knowledge ever breeds confidence and resolution, and perswades the heart; We dare trust a friend whose faithfulness we have tryed, and rest upon that which

Psal. 9. 10.

which wee know by experience. The promises are of a tryed truth; seeke from one end of the heavens to the other, turne all the Bible over, and see if ever any man leaned on the promise, and the Lord did not performe that which hee had promised for the

Ps. 119. 92.

good of his soule? *Except the Lord had beene my delight, I should have perished in my troubles (saith David.) My flesh faileth, and my*

Pla. 73. 26.

heart also; but thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. Here lies a great weight, and it is a worke of marvellous difficulty, and great necessity, and therefore that thy heart may sit downe satisfied in
the

the sufficiency of the promise, I will propound three rules how you may improve the promise for your uttermost benefit.

First, labour daily to present to thy soule a greater good in the promise than thou canst see any where else : It is a mans skill, and it should bee his endeavour daily to dogge his heart, and to looke what it is that the heart desires most, and present a greater good to thy soule therein, than in all things thou canst have elsewhere. Wee should deale with our hearts as a man would doe with a corrupt Iustice, when hee would have him to be on his side, the

How to
improve
the promi-
ses of our
benefit.

the onely way is to bribe him; (though that is sinfull) yet it is good to bribe the corrupt heart with the goodnesse of the promise, that the heart may cleave to it, and long after it. Doe honours, or riches, or the applause of men, or any earthly pleasures offer thee content and satisfaction? then perswade thy heart there is a greater worth and excellency in the promise than can bee had in all the world. Here is *an exceeding waight of glory*, he that hath this promise shall be made a *King*, and shall have glory that will *never vanish*: doth thy heart hanker after earthly joy and mirth? thou shalt finde

finde a greater mirth in the promise, than in the cracking of these thornes; (and so I may say of any thing else) Doth thy heart hanker after riches? then tell thy heart that there are *Unsearchable riches in Christ*, and through him wee have title to all the promises of this life and a better; we know hee that offers most for the bargain, hath it; therefore we should observe the goings out of our hearts, and what offers it selfe to give us most content; and present our soules with a greater good in God, than in all things else.

*Oh the height, and depth,
and length, and bredth of the
love*

love of Christ, which passeth knowledge

The consideration of this, as it workes a longing after Christ, and the promises, so it should fill our faces with shame and confusion, that ever we should set light by such riches of mercy, and walke unworthy of so great salvation. Could wee comprehend the unmeasurable dimensions of Gods love and goodnesse revealed in his word, how would our hearts bee enflamed towards him? When the sinner thinkes thus with himselfe, I that have done all that I could against so good a God, that my heart even bleeds to thinke of it,

it, there was no name under Heaven that I tore in pieces, but Godsname, his *wounds*, and *life*, and *heart-blood* I have rent and torne a thousand times. Nay, there was no command in the world that my soule so much despised, as the command of the Lord Iesus. There was no spirit that ever spake to mee, which I so much resisted as the Spirit of the Lord. O how many sweet motions hath the Lord let into thy soule, thereby to plucke mee from my base courses & sinful practices! by how many mercies hath hee allured mee, by how many gracious promises hath he invited me, to forsake

fake my finnes, and turne unto him? But I have flowne in the face of his *Ministers* and *blessed Spirit*, and rejected all termes of reconciliation. If I had lyen in a dungeon, and beene plagued with torments all my life time, yea, though I had another world full of misery to live in, I should count it infinite mercy, so the Lord would passe by my sinfull miscarriages, and pardon these inward rebellions.

But that **G O D** should send his dearest Sonne to love me, and that so incomparably, so inconceivably, that I could not possibly hate him, so much as he loves and affects me,

I could not so exceed in unkindnesse towards him, as hee hath exceeded in tender compassiō towards mee? Were it not righteous with God, never to speake comfort more to my soule, that have so lightly esteemed his promise & word of comfort? Had it not beene just with G o d to take advantage against mee? Was it not just that I which lived in sinne, should have perished in my sinne? Had it not beene just that I who have so much loved corruption, should have reaped the bitter fruit of it long ere this? But that the Lord should finde an enemy, and not slay him; nay, that

that he should give his beloved *Sonne* out of his bosome to save him ; is love not to bee expressed. Oh the *height* of this mercy beyond my desire ! Oh the *breadth* of this mercy without all bounds ! Oh the *length* of this meecy beyond all times ! Oh the *depth* of this mercy beyond all sin and misery !

Labour therefore to have accessse to the promise with thy soule, and speake a good word for it, and say, Stand by profits, and pleasures, and preferments, roome for the Lord *Iesus Christ*, and put a wonderfull price upon the promise ; this is an everlasting rule, whatsoever the

the soule doth account as
best; that it will chuse and
leave all others for it. I
would have the soule out-
bid the world, and labour
to out-shoot the Divell in
his owne Bow, and those
things which the Divell
casts in thy way, for hin-
dering thy soul from com-
ming to the promise, let
those things bee as meanes
to usher-in the promise.
As thus, when thou seest
thy heart looke after
friends, let those friends
usher the way to thinke on
the infinite love and fa-
vour of **G O D** in *Christ*;
and when thy heart would
faine hunt after wealth, let
this usher a way to the
promise, and say, If the
heart

heart finde such content in riches, what would it find in the riches of G O D 's grace in *Christ*? thus present a greater good in the promise, than in any thing else.

2.

The second rule is, Labour to convince thy heart of this, that all the things in the world without the promise are not good, and hadst thou all that the earth can afford without a promise, they were rather a curse to thee than a blessing. *Faith is the substance of things hoped for*, it gives a kinde of being and substance to all; there is no substance in honour and riches if they be not in faith; they are clogges

Heb. II. I.

gives

clogs and snares to a man, except faith give a title thereunto, and a blessing therewith; all our prayers have no substance in them, but are poore and empty words without faith in the promise to have what wee pray for: the most broken and meane prayer, when a poore creature can scarce utter four words with any sense, yet if it bee mingled with *faith*, is a very powerfull prayer; and the substance of all your hearing, and my preaching lyes in *faith*, otherwise they are but lost labour, for faith is it that gives a kinde of being to whatsoever we speake or doe.

The third rule in this

G. second

second meanes, is this, Labour to acquaint thy heart with the goodnesse of the promise, before carnall reason comes and possesse thy heart, how that the promise is most sure, and will come when it is most seasonable, and is best for thee, and when God sees it most fit wee shall certainly have it; *Let us therefore come boldly to the Throne of grace, that wee may receive comfort and mercy in time of need*; not when I see it fit, but when God sees it fit; this is it which carries away many poore sinfull hearts from resting upon the promise of God; sometimes the heart is a little affected with the excellency

lency of the riches of Gods grace, and seeth what great things the Lord hath done for his soule, and saith, Oh that I were such a one, and let me die the death of the righteous; but when it comes to passe that he hath not present ease and comfort, then hee casts away the good promise of the Lord, and the Devill prevayles wonderfully with these poore creatures: Therefore saith the Prophet; *When the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall the fruit bee on the Vines, when the labor of the Olive shall faile and yeeld no fruit, then wil I rejoyce in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation.* Saith the Prophet,

Hab. 3. 17.

comfort from the promise, and from the Lord Iesus *Christ* is then seasonable, when I have most neede, and may receive most good thereby ; then shall I bee sure to have the promise so to surprize my heart, that it may bee possessed with the all-sufficiency of it.

3 Meanes.

In the third place see that thou expectest all the good which thou needest and canst desire, from that sufficiency of the promise; doe not thinke to bring any good with thee to the promise, but goe to the promise for all good ; *there* are all the cords of mercy that must draw thee, and *there* is the all-sufficiency that

that can supply all thy wants, looke for all from thence, and expect power from the promise to inable thee to doe whatsoever thou wouldest, and to make thee able to beleeeve the promise.

It is a weake plea for a man to say, I dare not looke to the promise, I cannot beleeeve, if I could, then I might expect some good.

Thou shalt never beleeeve upon these termes, thou must not first have faith, and then goe to the promise, but thou must first goe to the promise, and from thence receive power to make thee able to beleeeve the promise,

Object.

Answ.

Ph. 119. 49

O Lord remember thy word to thy servant, wherein thou hast caused me to trust. When men are enlarged in love to a man, and make faire promises, this perswades the heart to trust to them, and to relye upon them for good; therefore a man doth use to say, I durst not have thought it, nor expected, if you had not promised it; so the promise of God made to the soule, makes the soule to rest upon it.

To expect faith without a promise, is all one as if a man should expect a crop without seed, for the promise is the immortall seed of Gods Word, whereby the Spirit breeds this faith in

Ioſ. 5. 25.

in the hearts of all that are his. *The houre is comming and now is, when the dead ſhall heare the voyce of the Sonne of God, and they that heare it ſhall live:* It is ſpoken of raiſing of a dead man from the grave of ſin. Firſt, there is the voyce of Chriſt to the ſoule, before there can be an Echo again of the ſoule to Chriſt; ſo the power of the promiſe muſt come to the ſoule, and we muſt heare the voyce of GOD in the promiſe, before we can returne an Echo again to the Lord; the Lord ſaith, *Come to me*, and the ſoule ſaith, *I come Lord*. When thou ſeeſt much deadneſſe and unſiſſe of heart, doe not

G 4 thou

thou goeaway, and looke off from the promise, and say, Thus I am, and so it is with me ; but rather goe to the promise, and say, Whatsoever frailties I find in my selfe, yet I will looke to the LORD, and to his promise, for if I want faith, the promise must settle me more and more therein, I must not bring faith to the promise, but receive faith from thence, and therefore I will waite till the Lord please to worke it.

4 Meanes.

Lastly, labour to yeeld to the equall condition of the promise, and make no more conditions, than God makes ; now the promise requires no more of a man, but

but that hee should come
and lay hold on mercy ;
therefore doethou require
no more than God in the
promise requires ; there
is enough in the promise
to doe thee good, therefore
expect all good from it,
and bee content to goe to
the promise, and take of
God whatsoever hee hath
therein offered. *Buy with-
out money* ; This is the con-
dition that God offers
mercy upon, buy wine and
Milke, that is, grace and
salvation ; without money,
that is, without sufficiency
of your owne ; if a man
should goe running up and
downe to borrow money
before he come to buy, he
may famish before hee

Esay 55.1.

G 5 come;

come; to the Lord offers *Christs* mercy and saluation, and saith, Come, take it without money, and wee runne up and downe to borrow money of *prayer*, and *duties*, and *power against corruption*, but you may be starved before you buy, if you goe this way to work.

Therefore make Gods comodities no dearer than God himselfe makes them, for this is the cause why many a poore soule is kept from comming to the promise: Oh, saith one, if I were able to master my sinnes and distempers, as such a one can doe, then I would beleeve; this is to bring money; but art thou content to have Christ,
and

and that *Christ* may have thee, and rule thee, and supply thy wants, and reveale thy finnes, and heale thy corruptions, then goe to the promise, & the Lord thereby will supply thy wants and master all thy finnes and corruptions; but that must come afterwards; *When I passed by thee, and saw thee in thy blood, (saith the Lord) and behold the time was as the time of love, and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy rakednesse; yea, I entered into a covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine; (that is, you were content that G O D should marry you in all your ragges) and I washed thee with water, yea*

Ezek. 16.
8, 9.

I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and anointed thee with oyle, I cloathed thee also with broidered worke. First, hee marries the Church to Himselfe, and then Hee gives grace, and passeth over his estate to his Spouse. Were it not a wonderfull great folly, if some great King should make love to a poore Milkmaide, and she should put it off, and refuse the match till shee were a Queene, whereas, if shee will match with the King, hee will make her a Queene afterwards. So wee must not looke for sanctification, till wee come to the Lord in vocation; for this is all the Lord requires of thee,
to

to see thy sinnes, and bee weary of them, and bee content that the Lord Iesus shall reveale what is amisse, and take it away, and that the Lord should give thee grace, then the Lord will bring thee to Himselfe, and thou shalt receive mercy from him, and then all thy corruptions shall fall to the ground. To summe up the poynt briefly thus :

First, when wee have pluckt away all carnall props, there is way made for the promise to come to us.

Secondly when our harts are possessed throughly of the sufficiency of Gods promise and grace, then
the

the promise drawes neare to the soules.

Thirdly, when wee expect all from the promise, even power to come to the promise, then the promise layes hold upon us.

Fourthly, when wee are content to yeeld to the equall conditions of the promise, then the promise carries us quite away.

Thus we have seene the hinderances removed, and the meanes propounded, and now that wee may be moved and perswaded importunately to seeke after this blessed grace of God, let us consider thus much; if you once get this grace, you get all other graces with it; it is a ground of
com-

comfort to set a man a worke, when in the doing of one worke he may doe another, nay, all works; so it is in the worke of faith, it should encourage us to labour for *faith*, because if wee get this, wee get all: men that are wise to provide for themselves, and to lay out their money in a purchase for the best advantage, if they see it well wooded and watered, especially if there be some golden Mines, all their minde will be upon that, because if they have that, they have all with it; so it is here, get grace, and get all, strengthen this, and all is strong, want this, and want all, once get this, and you need

Faith to be
laboured
for above
all graces.

need not to seeke for wisdom, for *faith* will make you wise to salvation; and you neede not labour for patience, for *faith* will make you patient, and *faith* will bring holinesse with it to purge you, for *faith* brings all grace. Now the Saints of God endeavour with much paines to get grace, and to subdue their corruptions; but yet they are feeble and weake therein, because they take not the right way.

Many a poore soule mournes and cries to heaven for mercy, and prayers against a stubborne hard heart, and hee is weary of his life, because his vile heart remaines, and yet happily

happily never gets little or any redresse; and the maine wound lyes here. Alas, you goe the wrong way, for if you would have grace, you must first of all get faith, and that will bring all the rest; buy the field, and the Pearle is yours; you must not stand strugling and striving with your owne hearts, and thinke to master a proud heart, that will not doe it, but let faith goe to Christ, and there is meeknesse, patience, humility and wisdom, and faith will fetch all these to the soule. Brethren, if you set such a price upon any of these graces, then labour for faith, get that and you shall

1 Cor. 3.
18.

shall have all; the Apostle saith, *Wee all with open face beholding as in a glasse, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image from glory to glory.* The Lord *Christ* is the glasse, and the glorious grace of God in *Christ* is compared to the glory of the Lord; therefore first wee must behold the grace in *Christ* by faith, before we can receive grace; first, see humility in *Christ*, and then fetch it there; first, see strength and courage to enable thy weake heart, and then fetch it. Would not you bee content to have a meek, gracious and humble heart? I dare undertake for many of you, that

that you had rather have it, than any thing under heaven, and you would thinke it the best bargaine that ever you made; and you say, Oh that I could once see that day, that this proud heart of mine might bee humbled. If I could see the blood of my sinnes, I should thinke my selfe happy, and desire to live no longer; then get faith, and so buy the whole, for they goe all together; you must not think to have patience and meeknesse without faith, but buy faith, and you shall have all together: Would you have the glory of God, & be more heavenly minded, then looke to it,
get

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get

get it by the eye of faith, and looke up to the glory of God in the face of Iesus Christ, and then you shall see it ; but hold you there then, and this will increase all your graces, to your everlasting peace and comfort. When men use to make a purchase, they will reckon up all, and say, There is so much wood, worth so much, & so much stock, worth so much, and then they offer for the whole, answerable to all the parcels : so there is *Item* for an heavenly mind, that is worth thousands, and *Item* for an humble heart, that is worth millions. And are these graces worth so much ? what is
faith

faith worth then? Oh precious faith, it will bring all graces with it, one degree of grace after another; grace here, and happinesse for ever hereafter. If wee have any hearts of men, (I doe not say of *Christians*) me thinkes this should provoke us to labour for this blessed grace of God.

FINIS.
